The Weaver-Bird's Nest

DIPANWITA ROY

Illustrations
Anup Ray

For children of the age group
8 to 10 years

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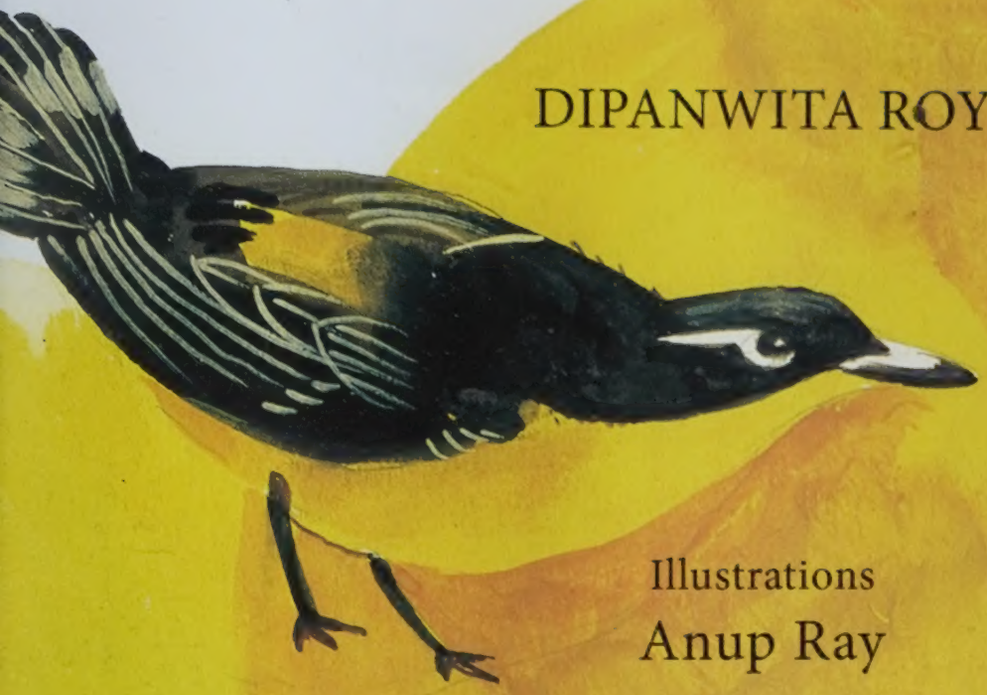

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There was a big garden filled with different kinds of flowers and trees of fruits. During the spring season, colourful flowers complemented the garden.

Different kinds of birds, butterflies and insects, rats, squirrels, and a beautiful tiny fairy named **Twinkle** resided in the garden.

This is the story of that little fairy who grows to become a weaver-bird.

Twinkle, the fairy, is very beautiful. She has two little wings on her back. Her dress is made of golden threads that are finer than those of a spider's web. There are also silver stars on her frock. They glitter in the darkness of the night.

A tree of big white roses is standing at one corner of the garden. The fairy lives inside the roses. Every night she sleeps comfortably on the soft petal-bed of a white rose. It is spring and naturally everyone living in the garden is very busy.

The **spider** living in the grape tree starts making her web with the first light of dawn. She keeps sliding up and down her rope. After a while, the first sunrays come through the leaves and fall on the web. And then the spider becomes very happy to see her handiwork.

In one corner of the garden lives a pair of **warblers**, called Dugga Tuntuni. They are the busiest couple in the whole garden. It is time for laying eggs and the Tuntunis are making a nest for their babies. While one brings the leaves in his beak, the other tears them with her beak and takes out the fine

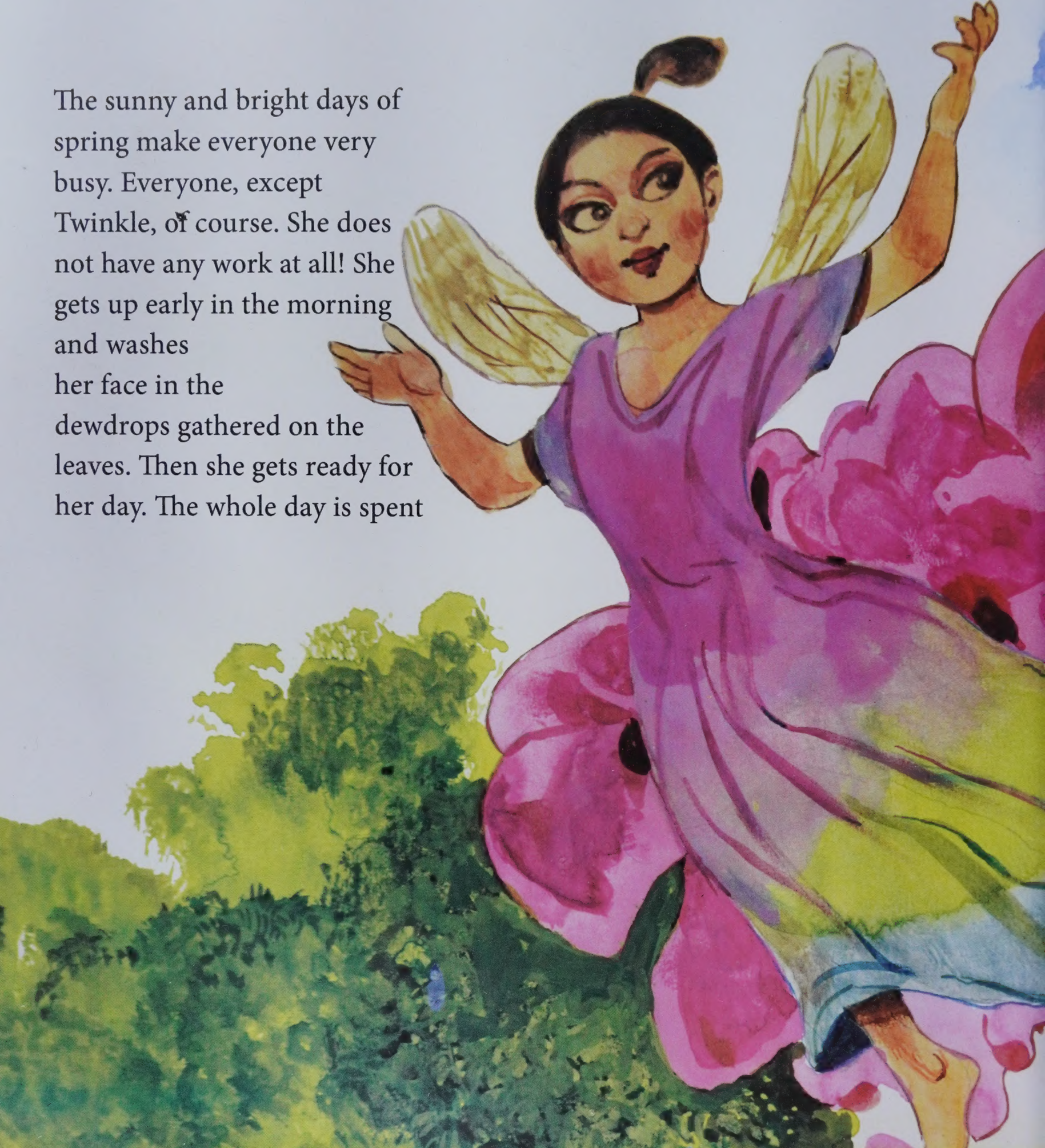
thread-like scales from them. Their nest looks like a small bowl. The mother Tuntuni will then lay her eggs in this nest. When the eggs hatch, the nest will be filled with the cries of tiny warbler chicks.

The **butterflies** and **bees** are also very busy. The garden is overflowing with flowers. The bees and butterflies are humming a happy song as they move to collect nectar as this is the right time for it.

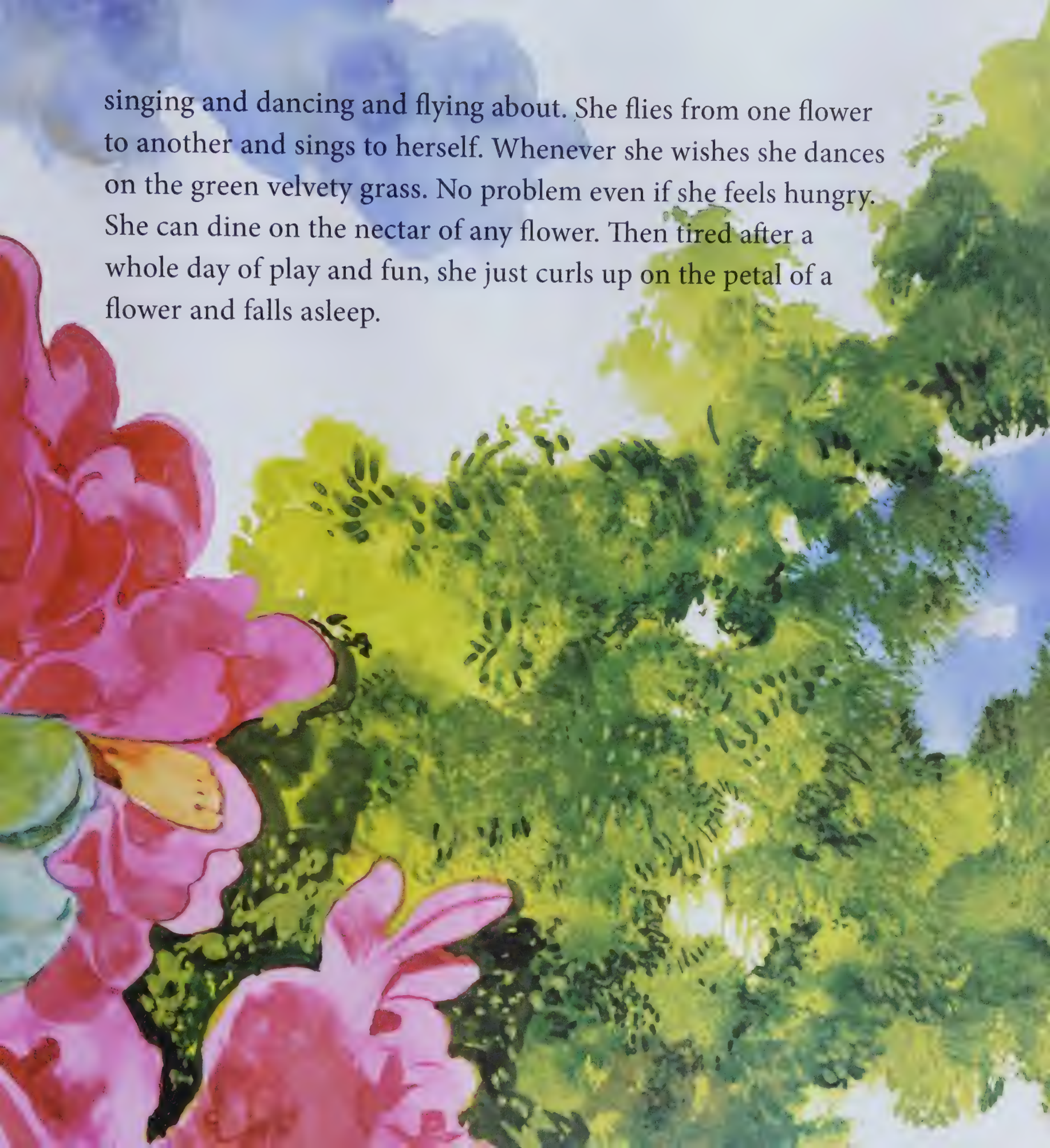
The **caterpillars** are also in a hurry. Every morning as soon as they wake up they start eating the new leaves of the *Sajna* (Drumstick) tree. They must eat as much as they can before forming their pupa. And then to emerge as beautiful butterflies. They can't wait!

The **squirrels** are gathering the nuts in the hollows of the trees.

The **rats** are gathering food for their babies. They are collecting the wheat, legumes and maize grains that lie in the fields after harvesting.



The sunny and bright days of spring make everyone very busy. Everyone, except Twinkle, of course. She does not have any work at all! She gets up early in the morning and washes her face in the dewdrops gathered on the leaves. Then she gets ready for her day. The whole day is spent



singing and dancing and flying about. She flies from one flower to another and sings to herself. Whenever she wishes she dances on the green velvety grass. No problem even if she feels hungry. She can dine on the nectar of any flower. Then tired after a whole day of play and fun, she just curls up on the petal of a flower and falls asleep.

Looking at the busy activity of the others, Twinkle laughs scornfully and thinks, 'What fools they are! But I guess, they can't help it. After all, they can't dance or sing like me, can they?' The fairy was feeling a little proud.

Soon the short spring gets over. The summer sun grows hotter and hotter. The blossoms on the mango tree mature into green mangoes. The flowers in the garden grow less. The rose flowers grow smaller in size. The fairy can barely stretch out on the

petals. There is not much nectar in the flowers. The green grass has dried to a colourless straw. The fairy is worried. Where will she go now? What will she do?

Then one scorching day, while all the creatures of the garden are safely inside their homes, Twinkle finds herself without a shelter. So the fairy goes and knocks on the Tuntuni's door. "Dear Tuntuni," she says, "Will you let me stay in your house for a while? It is too hot outside. I am so tired."

Tuntuni answers, "There is hardly any space for my babies and myself. Why do not you make a house for yourself?"

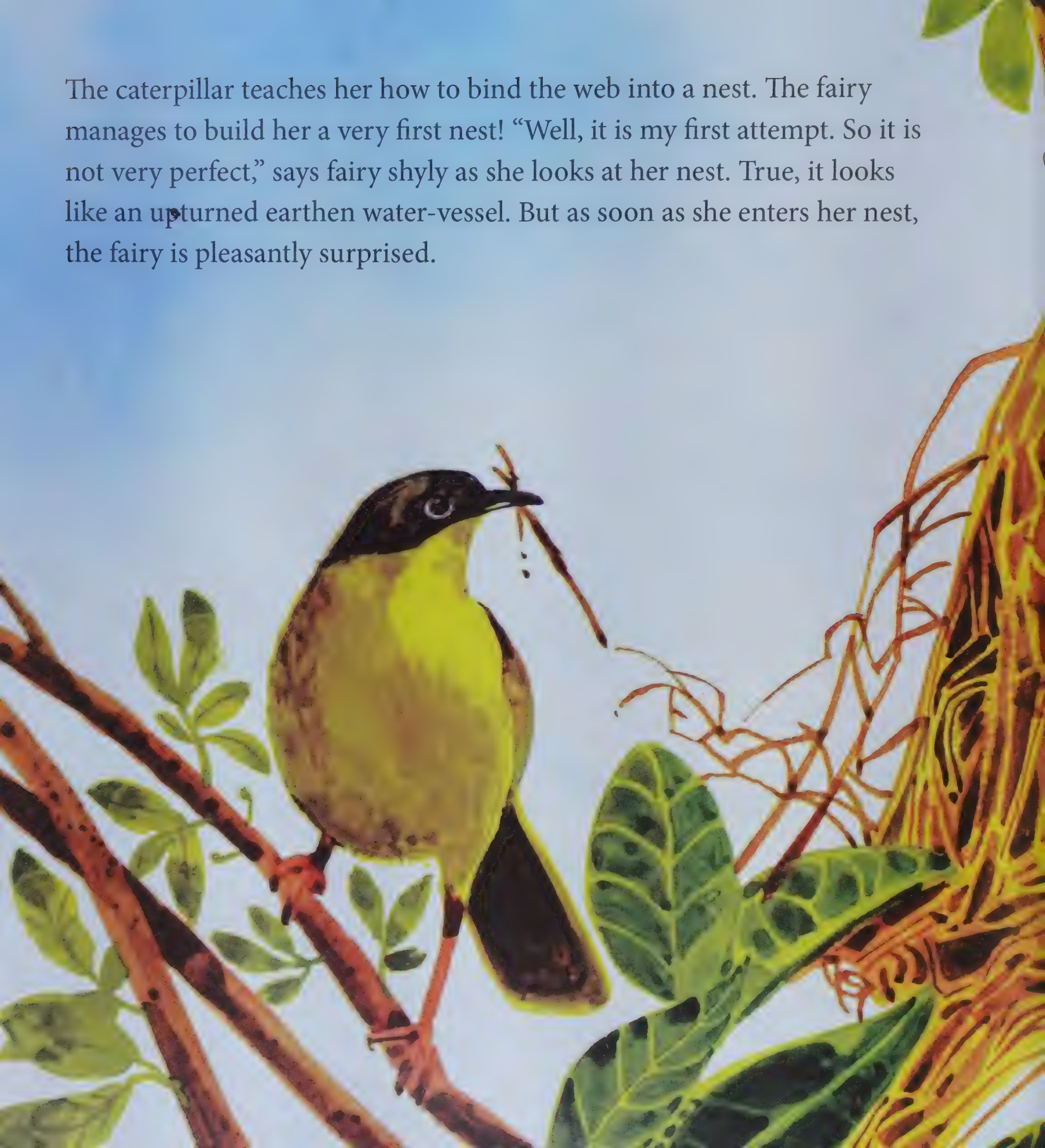
But the fairy does not know how to build a house. And neither does she have any wish to do so. So, she goes to the spider. But the spider too has no space for her.

Sadly, the squirrel and the rat too do not have any space to spare. It seems nobody wants to let her stay in their house.

The poor fairy suffers in the heat. Her skin gets badly burnt in the sun. Her wings lose their shine. She feels faint in the terrible heat. Was she going to die?

Finally, after giving it a lot of thought, Twinkle decides to build a house for herself. But how? She then brings some leaves and seeing this, the creatures of the garden come forward to help her. Tuntuni shows her how to take out thread like strands from leaves. The spider teaches her how to weave a web from these.

The caterpillar teaches her how to bind the web into a nest. The fairy manages to build her a very first nest! "Well, it is my first attempt. So it is not very perfect," says fairy shyly as she looks at her nest. True, it looks like an upturned earthen water-vessel. But as soon as she enters her nest, the fairy is pleasantly surprised.



"Oh! How cool! How comfortable!" she exclaims. "There is nothing better than your own home!" The fairy likes her nest so much that she does not go to the rose tree to stay in. Instead, she stays in her own nest.

Months after
months, seasons
after seasons, on
staying in a nest
like a bird, the
fairy begins to
change
her appearance
slowly and one day
becomes a
very sweet little
weaver bird.

The inhabitants
of the garden now
call that weaver bird,
the *Babui*.

They all
say in unison...

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"THE BABUI'S
LITTLE NEST IS
REALLY
THE BEST."

Dipanwita Roy is a journalist by profession and also an established writer. She writes fairy tales, stories on animals, science fiction, adventure and detective stories. She has nearly thirty books to her credit, including some written for the National Book Trust, India.

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